

Study Abroad at IU: From Summer Tramps to Service Learning



IU Overseas Study has traveled a long distance from its origins in 1879 with young David Starr Jordan.

What is the “typical” study abroad program? If your answer is “Junior-Year Abroad,” you likely were in college before 1980. If you said “service learning,” you’re probably in college right now or have just recently left. Study abroad has taken many forms over the years, and its evolution is accelerating in order to meet the needs of a generation of students who face a world where international competence is essential.

Thanks to an energetic, young biologist who thought the best way to learn about a place was to walk through it, Indiana University was one of the first U.S. institutions to take its students overseas for educational purposes. In 1879, David Starr Jordan, the man who was to become IU’s youngest president, began leading groups of 20 or 30 students and faculty in a European expedition to study natural history, language, and culture. The group sailed the Atlantic and then walked the entire summer discovering unfamiliar terrain and cultures at ground level. Students didn’t get formal credit for their work. (The “college credit” system was in its infancy at the time.) But there was no question in Jordan’s mind that his entourage was there to learn.

By the 1920s, U.S. universities had begun to give degree credit to work done overseas. IU offered an innovative summer program for music students, who traveled to Munich to attend performances and observe behind the scenes. If they passed the set examinations after their return, they received 7½ credits for their work. In 1939, IU students in education could get credit for completing a summer program in Mexico. In 1959, IU started the first U.S. study abroad program in the southern hemisphere. IU students majoring in Spanish undertook a full-immersion program with an academic year in Lima, Peru. Likewise, IU was a pioneer in getting the first group of undergraduate students to the Soviet Union in 1959 with special funding from the Carnegie Corporation. IU expanded its study abroad opportunities considerably in the 1960s when it made agreements with the universities of Bologna, Madrid, Hamburg and Strasbourg to have IU students study there for a full year.



“Are there aqueducts in Seville?” asks Todd Karr, study abroad advisor. It’s the kind of question Emili Sperling has no problem answering. In her first year back after a study abroad year in Madrid, Emili is a peer counselor for the office and advises students who are considering going abroad to study. “The tourist posters are wrong. There are no aqueducts in Seville.” The Overseas Study Resource Center is open daily, and hundreds find their way here each year.



A Transformative Experience

Kathleen Sideli, who heads IU's Office of Overseas Study, was herself a study abroad student as an undergraduate. The experience so transformed her that she jumped at the chance to be a part-time advisor in Overseas

Study while she was finishing her dissertation in the IU Department of Spanish and Portuguese. Since that day almost 30 years ago, she has been an active participant in international discussions about how study abroad should develop as student needs change.

Dr. Sideli was a founding member of an organization dedicated exclusively to study abroad issues, The Forum on Education Abroad. She has seen the annual numbers of IU study abroad students grow from a few hundred in the 1970s to 2,000 today. These figures reflect a national trend. Today more than 200,000 students at U.S. universities travel abroad to study each year. IU continues to rank in the top 20 U.S. institutions for the numbers of students going abroad.

Present at the foundation of so much in her field, Sideli has been asked to write about these developments for a new history of U.S. study abroad, scheduled for publication in 2008. She says that major issues for international educators today include the development of standards of good practice, the importance of assessing the learning outcomes, the need for increased data collection and the value of integrating all study abroad programs within the curriculum of the home university.

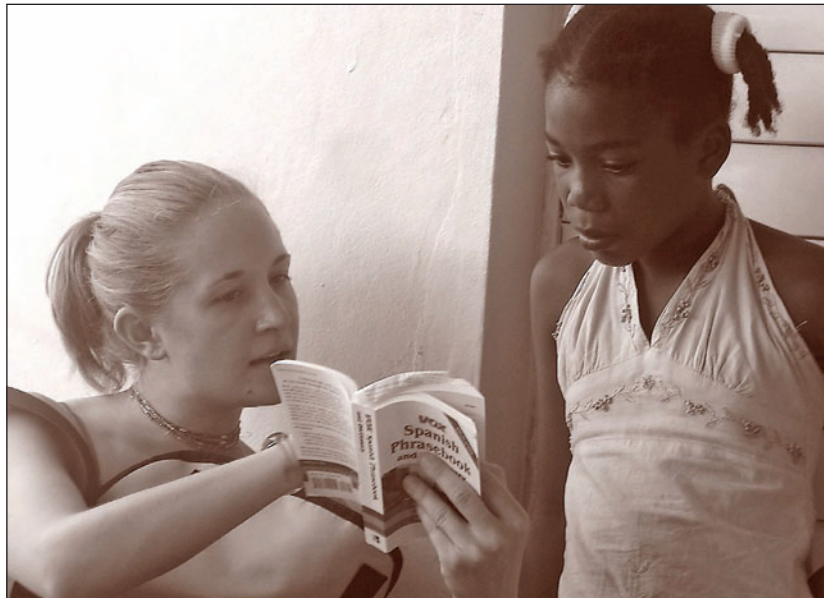
"There has never been a typical study abroad format," Dr. Sideli cautions. "If we're going to succeed at making study abroad available for a wider group of students, we have to tailor our programs to their needs. We can't be cloning our old ideas of what study abroad should be. IU has been diversified for a long time and has always valued short-term programs with substantive content. Study abroad is

not tourism or volunteerism. We work to assure that our courses have curriculum integrity, and that IU students who study abroad have a plan for how that study is related to their major or minor."

More Options for More Disciplines

An important change in recent years has been an increasing interest from professional schools and from majors outside the humanities and social sciences. Such programs are often limited by degree programs with tight, sequential requirements. Going abroad for an extended period while staying on track for the degree was impossible for many students. Summer and short-term programs were solutions for them. "We need to be expanding our programs at a faster rate. Finding options that will fit into more academic programs, both for the time commitment and the subject matter, is key."

Developing new study abroad options requires a major



"Nuestras Diferencias" by Sarah Renkert.

time commitment for a faculty member as well as for the office working out the logistics and safety of the plan. In 2000, IU alumnus Ed Hutton demonstrated his conviction in the value of study abroad with a \$9 million bequest to provide IU students with financial aid to study overseas. Four years later, the Hutton Foundation enhanced its commitment, providing \$225 thousand in seed money for faculty to

develop new courses and new ways to involve students in overseas study experiences.

Among the new courses funded was one that offered a brief immersion into Jamaican culture through service learning (see article, page 21). A sculpture course took students to Germany to work in a studio in Berlin while traveling to studios, galleries and museums in the region. A three-week course took IU theatre students to London where they read and attended plays and visited museum, exhibitions and costume collections. Another put students in the heart of England where they could hear lectures from Oxford dons on the inner workings of public and private organizations. In fall 2007, the Hutton Foundation renewed the grant, and new programs are being considered in Japan, India, and Mexico.



International Dimension

Recognizing their students' need for global engagement, IU academic units have begun their own experiments. The Kelley School of Business initiated an "International Dimension" requirement in its undergraduate business degrees in 1988. Students can meet the requirement with six hours of a language, or by taking courses in international business, economics or area studies. Or they can undertake an approved overseas study program. One result of that requirement was that numbers of Kelley students participating in study abroad began a steady rise. Today they make up one-third of all IUB students who study abroad.

In one such program, IU Professor Vijay Khatri, led a group of fifty IU business students to India for nine days in the fall of 2007. Students prepared by studying Indian culture and politics in class for several weeks before the trip. Once there, they visited India's top businesses, consulted with government officials, and learned first-hand how Indian citizens are dealing with the pressing issues of their culture. One stop, for example, was Hand-in-Hand, a public organization dedicated to eliminating child labor.

Whether the goal is mastering a language or learning how to interact in a different culture, or simply to study matters not available for study in Indiana, the study abroad experience has become an essential piece of undergraduate study and career preparation.

"The abstract becomes concrete," Sideli explains. "Students learn not only how others live, but also how they are more interrelated with others than ever before. When they go abroad, many of our students have not formed opinions about key issues. At home, they can hide in their group of friends and not be made to confront social issues. When they are abroad, they can't hide. They will be asked how they feel about gun control, abortion, gay rights, or racial prejudice, and they will have to react. As a result, they return home with their eyes open in a different way."

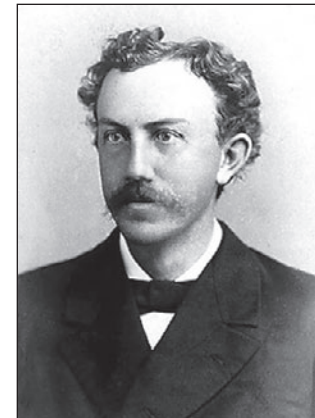
Who's Who in this Feature Story

Kathleen Sideli, Associate Vice President for Overseas Study

David Starr Jordan, Professor of Science, 1879-1885. IU President, 1885-1891

Scott Sernau, Professor of Sociology and Anthropology; Director of International Programs for IU South Bend

Vijay Kkatri, Assistant Professor of Information Systems, Operations and Decision Technologies, Kelley School of Business



Starr Quality

You needed to know what you were getting into when you signed on for one of David Starr Jordan's Summer Treks. Yes, there was the cruise across the Atlantic, and long train rides—but then there was the walking, as many as 400 miles in a summer. As you followed this biologist (and future IU president), you would learn a great deal of biology and natural history, might climb the Matterhorn, and would visit cultural and historic sites.

In honor of this earliest of U.S. study abroad efforts, IU has established the David Starr Jordan Scholarships for students on IU campuses in Gary, South Bend, Fort Wayne, Kokomo, Richmond, and New Albany. The scholarships defray some of the expense of study abroad when students join campus-specific programs that have been approved by the IU Overseas Study Advisory Council.



Study Abroad at IUSB

"A trip of a lifetime," "priceless," "preconceptions about a country disappear," and "I learned so much about myself," were just a few of the phrases that flew through the air when students at IU South Bend talked about their experiences, souvenirs, and photo albums.

Professor Scott Sernau recently brought together the now well-traveled IUSB students to talk up their experiences to other students who are considering the trips.

Michele Colbert of Middlebury is a senior who traveled to Mexico. "Without the David Starr Jordan Scholarship the trip would have been iffy." With the scholarship, she was able to take the trip of a lifetime. "There were things I learned about myself and the culture. It was a MasterCard moment; it was priceless."

Jessica Hall, of Granger, said it was the best class in her college career. Her trip to London and Paris gave her a great appreciation of the world and instilled confidence in herself. "I'd encourage others to take the chance."

Lynn Vo, of Osceola, said her trip to Latin America was an eye-opener. At first she was apprehensive and a bit scared of traveling. She learned to handle travel, heights, and Spanish all within a few weeks.

Rob White, of South Bend, participated in a Florence trip to take street photos. "There was a surprise on every corner."

In addition to the Jordan scholarships, IUSB also offers the Peyser scholarship just for IUSB study abroad students. The late Joseph Peyser was a professor of French at IU South Bend who often spoke about the importance of travel in education and global understanding.



My own roots abroad by Kathleen Sideli

I studied abroad in Madrid in 1971–72 with a program offered through Georgetown University at the Universidad Complutense. I was there for a full year and took a range of courses in literature and philosophy, all in Spanish. I lived with a host family that was comprised of a young couple and a U.S. roommate, Susan Subkowsky, who was on the same program. We lived in a very small apartment so we were in close proximity with our hosts. We had all three meals a day with them. The host father, Miguel Ureta, was a middle-school teacher so he engaged us in interesting conversations every day on geography, history, politics, language and culture. My own mother, Tosca Sideli, was able to visit me while I was there, so we caught the moment with this photo.

I had the opportunity to return to Spain a number of times, even living there again in 1974–76 and 1980–01, which meant I witnessed the societal reactions to the death of Franco, the coronation of King Juan Carlos, the transition to democracy and the attempted coup d'état of February 23, 1981. (Ironically, I was in Madrid just two days after the terrorist bombing on March 11, 2004, to visit the IU program and my daughter, who was studying in Madrid at the time, so I witnessed societal reactions to the bombing, including the unexpected election of the socialists that took place that week.) I have remained in touch with my host family continuously since that first time and stop by each time I return to Spain, most recently in November of 2007 when I honored my host mother, Lolita Martínez de Ureta, in my formal remarks at the 40th anniversary of the consortium of U.S. universities at the Complutense, presided over by the Rector. I communicate regularly by e-mail with the two daughters that were born during the years when I lived in Spain, now both young women making their own way in the world.

Sage Advice

Study Abroad for Global Engagement (SAGE) recently invited IU to participate in a national survey on the impact of study abroad. Surveys came back from IU study abroad alumni stretching back more than 40 years. Sideli was delighted with the number of personal messages included with the completed forms. She was not surprised, however, by their comments:

- "I am definitely one of the students whose lives changed dramatically as a result of living and studying overseas." (Madrid, 1975–76)
- "My two study programs through Indiana University (Strasbourg and Graz, Austria) were life-altering experiences." (Strasbourg 1993–94, Graz, 1995).
- "I'm a good case for how studying abroad changes your life!" (Japan, 1995–96)
- "The study abroad program changed my life and I would be more than happy to give you anything you need to help others to understand and ascertain the opportunities that were allowed me." (France, Summer 1990)
- "I LOVED my experience studying abroad in Sevilla, Spain and would highly recommend it to anyone and everyone. It had a great effect on my life and career path." (Seville, Spring 1995)
- "That one semester overseas influenced and continues to influence many aspects of my life, to include where I now live." (Freiburg, Spring 1995)

Links

Indiana University Office of Overseas Study:
www.indiana.edu/~overseas/

Study Abroad for Global Engagement (SAGE):
<http://cehd.umn.edu/projects/SAGE>

The Forum on Education Abroad:
www.ForumEA.org

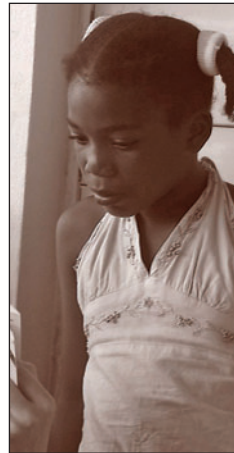
KSB Sophomore Block:
www.kelley.iu.edu/ugrad/academics/abroad.cfm

Chau Hiix, Belize Archaeology Field School:
www.indiana.edu/~overseas/flyers/chauhiix.html

Dominican Identity:
www.indiana.edu/~overseas/flyers/dr_identity.html

Photos from Study Abroad in Madrid:
www.indiana.edu/~overseas/flyers/Madrid.ppt

2007 Photo Contest Winners



"Nuestras Diferencias"
by Sarah Renkert
Location: Villa Mella,
Dominican Republic
Program: Dominican
Identity
Term: Summer 2007



"The Gun Show"
by Jason Farris
Location: Chau Hiix,
Belize
Program: Chau Hiix,
Belize Archaeology
Field School
Term: Summer 2007



"Homage"
by Billy Bennett
Location: Agra, India
outside the Taj Mahal
Program: KSB
Sophomore Block
Term: Spring 2007

To see more:

www.indiana.edu/~overseas/basics/return/photocontest2007.shtml